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## THE GRAND DUCHESS OF NEWYORK-STEIN.

A TRAGEDY IN FOUR ACTS, BY H. L. BATEMAN, ESQ.

The celebrated tragedienne, Mad'lle Tostée, supported by the modern Talma, M. Duchesne (whom we long to see as Hamlet), by M. Leduc (whose massive physique, ponderous voice and martial demeanor eminently fit him for the part of Macbeth), and by M. Legriffoul (whose Romeo would be a sight to see), again introduced, on Monday last, to a full house, M. Bateman's *chef d'œuvre*, "The Grand Duchess of Newyorkstein," M. Guffroi (a model Claude Melnotte) also reappearing as the heroic Fritz. With the general plot of the tragedy, its intense passion, its thrilling situations, its absorbing melancholy, its overpowering pathos, its electrifying syntax, and its overwhelming prosody, our readers are already acquainted. We have but to record the manner of all these matters. Mlle. Tostée gave the inspiring address to her troops like another Queen Elizabeth, at another Tilbury. We were not at all surprised to witness the military ardor gleaming—at so much per week—from the various colored eyes of her devoted army. M. Duchesne as the General, M. Guffroi, with all his blushing honors thick and fast upon him, impressed all present profoundly with their majestic by-play at this juncture, and the curtain descended for the purpose of rising again immediately after for the second act. Our pen fails us to describe worthily the heart-rending interview between the Duchess and her devoted Fritz, who, loving her with all the mad and chivalric idolatry of a Provencal Tronbadour, doth yet, with noble and unselfish agony, conceal, deny, repress and trample on his boundless affection for his enchanting sovereign, while she, oh, cruel fate! is inexorably condemned—for reasons of state—to declare her irrepressible love for him. These conflicting feelings, this torture of misunderstanding, constitute one of the finest scenes in all tragic literature, and in its evolvment M. Bateman has been so successful as to cause the keenest pangs of envy to Victor Hugo and other smaller dramatists; though why so many of the audience laugh so consumedly is beyond our comprehension. The conspiracy scene was wonderfully done: the settled design of the three plotters to slay the gallant Fritz, their saturnine looks, their ferocious exultation, their mysterious shibboleth, their gloomily fantastic war-dance, the dread purpose so appallingly manifest in the sepulchrally wild and mournful trio of extermination they sing—all were portrayed with a rare tragic power, and we sympathetically shuddered for the gallant and aforesaid Fritz, although this scene also, we are sorry to record, was marred by peals of inextinguishable laughter.

We pass lightly over the interrupted wedding, merely remarking that Wanda delivered her marriage lines with unusual effect. In the last scene of the tragedy the Duchess, torn from the arms of Fritz, whom she does not love, from the arms of the Baron Grog, whom she thought she lov'd, and consigned to the arms of Prince Paul, whom she says she'll endeavor to love, gaily proposes to sing the Legend of the Goblet, does so, and drains the goblet, thrills the spectators to the doors and to the corridors! for the beverage she quaffs in the guise of

wine is—Ha! ha! poison! and thus, thus does she free herself from the thralldom of Prince Paul and his Holland Gazette. Fritz immediately cleaves Baron Puck to the chin, General Boum stabs Prince Paul to the heart, then he and Wanda dually commit twicoid with Baron Puck's umbrella, and Fritz, with his back hair down and his beard "a sable silver," remains a raving maniac amid the overjoyed soldiery! Curtain!

NOTE.—The above is by a new critic, strongly recommended to us. The gentleman, not understanding French, evidently mistook the violent gesticulations of the comedians for powerful tragic demonstrations. We need hardly say the gentleman will not suit us. His style is flagrantly preposterous, and he does not seem to understand a joke.—*Ed. Watson's Art Journal.*

## NORMA IN THE EIGHTH AVENUE.

Harnessing our literary and editorial bays, we sumptuously drove down, on Monday evening last, to Pike, Harrison & Maretzek's Opera House, and a path to the door having been delved out through the superincumbent and utterly aggravating snow, we ensconced ourselves in our special orchestra chair, just in time to witness the entrance of that redoubtable Gallic warrior and unscrupulous gay deceiver, Pollio Pancani, who, forgetful of the wise saying, "'Tis best to be off with the old love before you are on with the new," immediately broke off into vocal celebration of the charms of his new *inamorata*, Adalgisa, and boldly declared his resolution of overthrowing the "impious altar" of the Druid Priestess Norma! of course—ingenuous young man—never supposing or hoping for a moment that Norma herself would be buried in its ruins! Well, as opera-goers are aware, he reckoned without his hostess, and very properly shared her stake with her!

Norma, we imagine, is Madame Rosa's pet character. It is, in our estimation, certainly her best, for her stature and commanding appearance eminently fit her for the part personally, and her perfect control of her voice, her *maestria* in her art, her vibrant, rich and penetrating notes, enable her vocally to realize the composer's intentions in this extremely arduous impersonation, this lyric *capo d'opera*. Her rendering of *Casta Diva*, with its brilliant *cabaletta*, was literally a vocal triumph. It was sympathetic, brilliant and refined, and exhibited that delicious volubility which gives to Parepa's singing the feeling of irrepressible spontaneousness. In the wildly impassioned portions of the character, a higher degree of dramatic fervor might be asked for, but her irreproachable vocalism almost disarms criticism, compelling admiration in its stead.

As to Signor Pancani—the tassel on our critical cap twitches nervously, but

"*Fiat justitia ruat Pikum*,"

and Pancani fulfills neither of the three conditions enumerated by Lablache as necessary to constitute a singer—1stly, voice; 2dly, voice, and 3dly, voice! All but these three Signor Pancani possesses; he phrases well, colors well, is dramatically good, is satisfactory in every way; but his voice is toneless and hollow, and beyond F on the top line loses all pretension to sonority. His *tour de weakness* in the famous ascending passage of the grand trio—declaimed with true tragic vehemence and power by Madame Rosa—was painfully apparent. Madame

Testa as Adalgisa won our heartiest commendation, and was warmly applauded by the audience, though no oblation offered on our shrine, no penance she could perform, would induce us to pardon her distressing and constant *tremolo*! Were we forty times a Gaul, never could we say to the owner of such an instrument of torture, "*Vieni in Roma, Vieni o cara!*"

Antonucci is one of the noblest *bassi cantanti* on our list of notable artists, and nobly did he bear himself and sing on Monday night. When we say that Maretzek commanded the choral and instrumental forces and conducted the opera, we have chronicled all that need be said on that point. The house was full, the singers and audience happy, Maretzek beaming, Pike prominent and pervasive with a glittering breastplate of diamonds, and swathed in the wavy folds of a lustrous and ebon moustache, the new Operatic and everything else Manager, Lafayette Harrison, smiling, satisfied and triumphant, and the Eighth avenue glorified with scores of unaccustomed carriages.

THE LIEDERKRANZ FANCY DRESS BALL.—One of the most brilliant events of the season, the Liederkranz Ball, took place at the Academy of Music on Thursday evening, the 20th inst. It is almost superfluous to say that the Academy was thronged, for the wide-spread popularity of this powerful Society renders that a foregone conclusion. It was thronged by the highest and best of all classes of New York society. It was not the wealthy German element alone that was represented, for American and other nationalities contributed beauty and talent as willing and admiring votaries to the court of Prince Carnival. We have rarely seen a more brilliantly dressed assemblage, and we certainly never saw a happier or a lighter-hearted throng. The famous procession was, as usual, the great point of attraction, but it was hardly as spirited or as overwhelming as in former years. Still it contained many marked and curious features and inaugurated the spirit of fun and good humor which prevailed during the whole evening. After the grand procession, the visitors were dispersed more equally through the Academy, and fair space was left on the floor for those who were inclined for Terpsichorean exercise, and it was a brilliant sight to see hundreds of couples weaving and interweaving along the whole length of the magnificent ball room, which the area of the auditorium and stage of the Academy of Music presents. The company was elegant and spirited; the music dance-provoking and enjoyable; the Committee courteous, cordial and boundless in their hospitality, and the whole affair was in all its details a perfect success.

One of the features of the occasion was the appearance of several little journals evidently got up for the occasion, containing humorous and sarcastic hits, with illustrations, upon local and national subjects. We quote one which seems to squint a little towards the great piano war of 1867. It is possible that our readers will penetrate the mystery of the names, so carefully and thinly disguised:

PEGASUS AND PIANOS.

That "Music hath charms" the PIANO men know,

As the Emeralds they fob signed by Spinner & Chase,